

SHINA IN CONTEMPORARY PAKISTAN

Lesser-Known Languages of South Asia. Status and Policies, Case Studies and Applications of Information Technology.

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Shina in contemporary Pakistan

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1. Distribution and genetic affiliation of Shina

Shina is an Indo-Aryan language of the Dardic group, spoken in the Karakoram and the western Himalayas: Gilgit, Hunza, the Astor Valley, the Tangir-Darel Valleys, Chilas, and Indus Kohistan, as well as in the upper Neelum Valley and Dras. Outliers of Shina are found in Ladakh (Brokskat), Chitral (Palula and Sawi), Swat (Ushojo; Bashir 2003: 878) and Dir (Kalkoti).¹

Bailey (1924: xiii) divides Shina into three dialect groups: (a) Gilgit, (b) Astor, Gures and Dras and (c) Kohistan and Chilas. Two scholars, Strand (2001b) and Radloff (1992: 122–132) identify two main dialect centres for Shina. One is in the area around Gilgit, and the other is in the area around, east, and south of Chilas.

The population figures presented in Table 1 have been obtained from: (a) Kohistan: *District Census Report of Kohistan 1998* (Government of Pakistan 1998), (b) Diamer, Gilgit and Baltistan: *Population and Housing Census of the Northern Areas 1998* (Government of Pakistan 1998), (c) Palula (Henrik Liljegren, Frontier Language Institute), (d) Kalkoti (Muhammad Zaman, Summer Institute of Linguistics) and (e) Shina speakers who have migrated (Kohistani 1998).²

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many Shina-speaking communities were conquered by the Maharaja of Kashmir, and came indirectly under British influence. Today, Pakistan administers the Shina-speaking communities of the Gilgit, lower Hunza, Tangir-Darel, Astor and Chilas valleys, as well as those in Indus Kohistan, while India administers the Shina-speaking communities in the Neelum (Kishenganga) drainage, the Gures and Tilel valleys, the Dras plain and Ladakh. In modern times, eastern Shina dialects are in contrast with Balti and Kashmiri, the Gilgiti dialect with Burushaski and Khowar, and the Kohistani dialect with Pashto and Indus Kohistani, all in addition to Urdu (Bashir 2003: 878).

The aim of this paper is to provide information about the use of Shina in its two main centres: Gilgit and Chilas/Kohistan. This focus on Gilgit and Chilas/Kohistan not only reflects the local perception of cultural and linguistic patterning in the Shina-speaking zone but is also governed by pragmatic con-

straints. Due to adverse weather conditions, geographical inaccessibility, and time constraints, we were not able to visit Astor and Baltistan.³ When providing statistical data, however, there is a need to separate the Shina-speaking areas of the Northern Areas (comprising five districts, of which Gilgit and Diamer contain the largest number of Shina speakers) from those of district Kohistan, even though parts of Diamer, with its headquarters at Chilas, belong linguistically and culturally to the Chilas/Kohistan dialect area. This is because census and other statistical data for the Northern Areas and district Kohistan are published separately. In describing language use, it is more useful, when possible, to group Chilas, Darel and Tangir with Kohistan.

Our central hypothesis is that to the extent that modern education, communications and technology have reached the Shina-speaking areas of Pakistan, the use of Shina has become restricted to the private and local spheres of life. Communication in public fora increasingly takes place in Urdu (the official language of Pakistan), English, or Pashto (the regional language of the North-West Frontier Province in which Kohistan is included). But there are forces working against this: committed Shina-speaking intellectuals in Gilgit and in the Kohistan and Diamer districts, as well as Islamic missionaries whose priority is communicating with individuals. We shall first make an overview of Gilgit, as an appropriate example of language use in the north, then contrast this with Kohistan (and to the extent possible, Chilas, Tangir, and Darel), where conditions are quite different.

2. Shina-speaking districts in Pakistan

2.1. Gilgit

Gilgit is the center for trade and government in Pakistan's Northern Areas, and a commercial centre for trade between China and Pakistan over the Khunjerab pass. Educational facilities include high schools, degree colleges, and a post-graduate college. It is also to a certain extent a center for communications, both telecommunications and radio (Radio Pakistan broadcasts daily from Gilgit, reaching areas which are unable to receive transmissions from Islamabad).

Although trade is increasingly important in Gilgit town, the economy of the Gilgit valley, as well as of the Shina-speaking areas of the Hunza river valley to the north, is still based on farming and herding. The opening of the Karakoram Highway has improved the marketability of the fruit and nuts which are a specialty of these valleys, and Shina speakers are being integrated into wider economic networks (Schmidt 1984: 681).

Table 1. Shina speaking population in Pakistan

District	Sub-division	Population
Kohistan, NWFP	Palas	165 613
	Dassu	184 746
	Pattan (estimated Kohistani speakers who can speak Shina in Pattan, Jijial, Duber, Kiyaal, Seo and Khandia valley)	20 000
(Chilas)	Astor	71 666
	Chilas	72 723
	Darel/Tangir	59 193
Gilgit	Gilgit	145 272
	Nagir-II	16 562
	Punial	37 773
	Ishkoman	18 406
	Gupis	29 648
Baltistan	Rondo	11 458
	Gultari	10 000
	Kharmang	12 000
Chitral	Drosh Tehsil (Ashret and Byori valley)	10 000
Dir Kohistan	Upper Dir Tehsil (Kalkoti Shina)	5 000
Swat	Swat Tehsil (Ushojo Shina)	1 200
Total		871 260

Table 2. In other districts/areas where Kohistani Shina speakers have migrated

District	Population
Batgram	20 000
Mansehra	25 000
Abbottabad	12 000
Haripur	8 300
Rawalpindi	9 930
Islamabad	2 200
Swat	390
Mardan	325
Hazro/Attock	9 250
Muzaffarabad	8 900
Rawalakot	4 680
Lahore	430
Karachi	860
Hyderabad	349
Estimated Shina speaker of NAs of Pakistan in lowland cities	150 000
Total	252 614

(Source: Kohistani 1998: 11)

In Gilgit, Shina is the language of the home and the local marketplace, wherever communication with non-Shina speakers does not require the use of the lingua franca, Urdu. But it is not the dominant language of public fora, although some of the speeches in the local elections of 1994 were in Shina (Radloff 1992: 163, 173; Rahman 1996: 218).

Radio Pakistan began broadcasting in Shina from Rawalpindi in 1949 and from Gilgit in 1979. The standard chosen is the Gilgiti dialect. The Gilgiti dialect would thus appear to be the most appropriate focus of efforts to promulgate a standard medium for communication throughout the region, but unfortunately, the percent of lexical similarity between Gilgiti and Kohistani Shina is only about 63–65%.⁴ There are also substantial cultural differences between Gilgit and Kohistan/Chilas. The population of Gilgit is predominantly Shia, and has strong cultural links to Iran. The populations of Kohistan and Chilas are overwhelmingly Sunnis of the Deobandi sect, with strong affiliations to Swat, and more recently, to Raiwind in the Punjab. These religious and cultural affiliations often overshadow linguistic and ethnic relationships.

The dialect of Gilgit has a writing system, which is not yet fully standardized, and members of a literary organization based in Gilgit, the Karakoram Writers Forum, attempt to publish in it. M.S. Namus, Amin Zia (1986) and Abdul Khaliq Taj (1990) have developed orthographies by modifying the Persian alphabet (Rahman 1996: 218, quoting Ali Usman 1991).

2.2. Kohistan, Chilas, Tangir and Darel

In Kohistan, Shina is spoken along the left bank of the Indus river in Kolai, Palas, Jalkot, Shatial and Sazin,⁵ not only by ethnic Shins, but also by the pastoral Gujars and agricultural Sarkhali population. A closely related form of Shina is spoken in the Chilas, Astor, Darel and Tangir valleys. In Duber and Patan on the Indus right bank, Shina is spoken as a second language, for purposes of trade within Kohistan.

In Kohistan, Chilas and its side valleys, Tangir and Darel, Shina is the means of communication for all purposes, wherever communication with outsiders does not necessitate communication in Urdu or Pashto. The government has established courts in Kohistan, Chilas, Darel and Tangir, but it has only limited means of enforcing the Pakistani legal code in such remote and rugged areas, and customary law continues to be observed throughout the region. In a government court, arguments and verdicts might well be presented in the national language, Urdu, or the provincial language, Pashto; but in a tribal *jirga* (council) of ethnic Shins, arguments continue to be presented in Shina.

In the bazaars of Kohistan, Chilas, Tangir and Darel, non-Shina speakers conduct business in Shina if they can speak it, even if they speak another language among themselves. The rate of bilingualism is low, and among bilinguals, the second language is often a pidgin of Urdu and Pashto, or Urdu and Hindko, which is effective only for basic transactions. Among women, the rate of bilingualism is virtually nil.⁶

2.3. Shina in Chitral, Dir Kohistan and Swat

Before the modern dialects of Shina underwent the processes of grammatical change that resulted in the complex verb tenses and noun inflections which we find today, groups of Shina-speakers migrated from Chilas to Chitral, Dir Kohistan, and Swat. In Chitral and Dir Kohistan we find an archaic variety of Shina, Palula, along with the related dialects of Kalkoti and Sawi. This migration took place according to Morgenstierne (1941: 8) and Cacopardo (1995) around two hundred years ago.

According to Bashir (2003: 882) Palula is spoken by 7000–9000 people in the villages of Ashret, Byori, Ghos and Purigal in southern Chitral. The Palula speakers of Byori say that they have come from the Tangir valley via Swat and Dir; the people of Ashret have a tradition that they migrated from Chilas via Laspur and belong to the Bota tribes of the Chilas area.⁷ Working with genealogies and calculating 20 years to a generation, Strand (2000a) places the time of migration earlier than Morgenstierne's and Cacopardo's calculations, reckoning that the people of Ashret must have left Chilas in ca. 1640.

The speakers of Kalkoti, spoken in Kalkot in upper Dir Kohistan, share the same oral history as the people of Ashret. Sawi was spoken originally in the Sau valley south of Arandu (where the Mastuj river flows out of Chitral into Afghanistan), having been transplanted there from Chitral (Buddruss 1967). Although heavily influenced by Gawarbat, it is still mutually intelligible with Palula. Decker (1992: 80) finds 56–58% lexical similarity between Sawi and Palula. Since the 1979–1987 war in Afghanistan, Sawi speakers have been dispersed in refugee camps in Chitral and Dir, and their number is not known (Bashir 2003: 887). Decker (1992: 77–78) estimates the number of speakers at 8000–12 000.

Palula is a marginalized language. Palula speakers are not comfortable speaking their own language in the Drosh bazaar. They either remain silent or speak Khowar, the principal speech of Chitral, which is a distinct language.

Another outlier of Shina is Ushojo, which is spoken in the Bishigram side valley of the Swat river by 1200–2000 people whose oral history says that

they migrated there from Kolai in Indus Kohistan several hundred years ago.⁸ Lexical research by Decker (1992: 66, 72) shows that Ushojo is most closely related to Kohistani Shina. Many Ushojo speakers also speak Torwali and Pashto.

2.4. Shina outside Shina-speaking areas

Some Shina speaking families have migrated, either temporarily or permanently, out of the Kohistan and Chilas districts to the districts of Batagram, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Hazro, Mingora, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Lahore, Hyderabad and Karachi. In the Pulandran area of the Kaghan Valley, speakers of Kohistani Shina come from the Hazara District and set up small summer settlements along the main road. Whatever their origin, migrant Shina-speaking families maintain strong links with their native areas, both with their patrilineage ("blood relationships") and their mother's family ("milk relationships") through the exercise of land ownership rights, economic exchange and arrangement of marriages. In Rawalpindi and Mansehra, Shina speakers have established their own *mahallas* (neighborhoods), which range in size from 40 to 100 households.

The settlement of Shina-speakers in lower-lying areas of the Northwest Frontier Province (such as Oghi, Abbottabad, Qalandarabad, Havelian, Haripur and Hazro) where Hindko and Pashto are spoken has led to an unprecedented level of linguistic interaction. In these areas, Shina-speakers live side by side with speakers of Urdu, Punjabi, Hindko and Pashto, and members of the younger generation often speak several of these languages fluently. In Rawalpindi, the Shina-speaking population interacts with speakers of Kashmiri, Hindko and Punjabi, leading to bi- and multilingualism in those languages. Speakers of Kashmiri, Hindko and Punjabi are also beginning to learn Shina.

In urban areas, Shina-speakers deal daily with the use of Urdu and Punjabi in the marketplace. Education, print and electronic media are in Urdu and English. As a language with few written texts, Shina tends to be restricted to the home. Traditional lore is being lost, much vocabulary is borrowed from Urdu and Punjabi, and grammatical changes are taking place.

3. Language use today

An examination of the use of Shina in private and public domains shows that the language has the most restricted role precisely in the place from which a

literary standard might be expected to emerge: in its urban centre, Gilgit. With the exception of a few committed intellectuals, the educated elite consider it an inferior language, which they are ashamed to speak in public. Our data support the rule of thumb for language use given by the senior librarian of Gilgit Municipal Library, Sherbaz Ali Khan Barcha:⁹

Shina is used for:	speaking with parents and family
Urdu is used for:	communication in public, outside the family
English is used for:	employment in private and government sectors
Arabic is used for:	religious rituals

Even though Gilgit is the largest Shina-speaking town and the centre of Shina intellectual life, the lexical difference between the Gilgiti and other dialects, reinforced by religious differences between Shias and Sunnis, prevents it from emerging as an engine for the development of literary and cultural activities in Shina, and hinders efforts to develop a standard written form of Shina. Intellectual life is closely connected with religion, and in this domain, people look outward for inspiration. The Shias of Gilgit continue to look to Iran; the Sunnis of Chilas and Kohistan look southward to Raiwind in the Punjab (the centre of the Tablighi Jamaat).¹⁰ Under the government of Zia ul-Haq, religious antagonism escalated into open conflict, and a large village in Gilgit, Jalalabad, was set on fire by Sunnis from Kohistan, Chilas, Darel and Tangir.

Shina is strongest in rural areas, where modern education has only recently become available. (Consequently bilingualism in Urdu is rare.) These areas are so geographically vast, and the terrain is so difficult, that there is little chance of Shina suffering language death in the near future. But this relegation of Shina to rural and domestic spheres hinders it from developing a single standardized form, or more than a rudimentary literature.

The Astor valley lies on the Astor river, which is a tributary of the Gilgit river, but is separated both from the Gilgit valley and from Chilas by the Nanga Parbat massif. Data for Astor provided by Radloff (1992: 163) suggest that language use in Astor is similar to that of Gilgit.

3.1. Language use in the home, *baithaks* and *hujras*

A *baithak* (Shina *byak*) is a room or rooms where men sit and where male guests are entertained. A *hujra* is a guest house for men, where guests are housed and fed for free (a custom borrowed from Swat). It serves as a venue for negotiating social and economic exchange. Only well-to-do men can

maintain *hujras*. *Baithaks* are found all over the Shina-speaking region (sometimes called *drawing rooms* in Gilgit). *Hujras* are a typical feature of tribal Kohistan (where the ethnic Shin community is composed of lineages descended from a common ancestor, holding at least in theory equal status, sharing all resources equally and recognizing no overlord).¹¹ They are found only in the valleys of Indus Kohistan, Chilas, Tangir, and Darel. Gilgit is not tribal but instead a stratified society with a long history as a state headed by a monarch, and a *hujra* would have no function there.

Shina is the language of the home throughout the Shina-speaking areas. But as increasingly more new products, tools, technology, and travelers appear, loan words from Urdu and English continue to increase, especially in commercial hubs like Gilgit town or in cities outside the Shina-speaking areas. Indigenous vocabulary decreases correspondingly. Construction of the Karakoram Highway (which runs from Besham along the Indus and Gilgit rivers, through Gilgit and Hunza to China over the Khunjerab Pass) has resulted in a quantum increase in trade, tourism, communication with lowland Pakistan, and government activities. The result is that Gilgit town is more tightly linked with the rest of Pakistan, and the influence of Urdu and English has greatly increased. In Chilas, Darel, Tangir and Indus Kohistan, the pace of change is much slower, but even there, change is visible.

Folklore and folk knowledge are being displaced by information broadcast through television and radio. As discussion in the home increasingly revolves around television programs and newscasts, traditional topics of discussion are abandoned. In a panel interview, Amin Zia and Abdul Khaliq Taj reported that they are not in a position to adequately transmit the folklore and folk knowledge they learned from their parents and grandparents to their children.¹²

Shina-speaking children whose families have migrated to cities and towns in the lowlands suffer the most language loss, and are often chided for their broken Shina when they visit their places of origin. Grammatical changes have been observed among children who live in other urban areas of Punjab and the North West Frontier Province. To give two examples: the feminine plural forms of verbs are being lost, and the oblique stem *aso-* of the 1st pl. pronoun *bes* is now used as the nominative stem, both with system-wide effects. In Rawalpindi, where Shina speakers live in four *mahal-las* or neighborhoods, Shina-speaking children interact with Punjabi and Hindko-speaking children on the street, in the marketplace and in schools. Viewing of television is widespread. In contrast to older migrants who left Kohistan between 1940–1970, the younger generation is rapidly replacing Shina vocabulary with Punjabi and Urdu. This will have profound effects on

urban Shina when the older generation dies. One wonders to what extent the links with rural Shina-speaking areas can be maintained under these circumstances.

Rural areas are far less affected by modernization, and here both the Shina language and traditional lore are robustly maintained. These areas include rural parts of the Gilgit valley (Punial, Jaglot, Nagir, Ishkoman, Gupis, Astor, Hanzil, Gulapur, Sherot and Bagrot) and all the Shina-speaking areas of the Indus valley and its side valleys (Darel, Tangir, Chilas and Indus Kohistan). In Kohistan, even Shina speakers who know Urdu object to being addressed in Urdu, or for that matter Punjabi or Pashto. Kohistani migrants to the low-land continue to speak Shina at home (a necessity until such time as women's education becomes widespread), and to correct their children's speech. In the Kohistan and Chilas districts, language use in the home has hardly changed for the past three decades despite the introduction of government schools. But here, also, new vocabulary from Urdu, Punjabi and Pashto is introduced by Tablighi missionaries, and by girls from urban areas who are married into rural families.

Under the influence of Deobandi Islam, women have less opportunities to meet and share experiences. In Kohistan, for example, women used to collect wood and wild vegetables, and to participate in collective agricultural tasks (for example, the collective harvesting known as *hashar*). They tend to be more more restricted to the home now than before, although they still meet one another in the annual migration to the summer pastures.

Interaction among boys and men is also somewhat decreased in Kohistan, as the custom of males sleeping in the collective *hujra* at night is being given up in favor of individual *baithaks* attached to homes. In the *baithaks*, conversation is turning from traditional topics such as agricultural issues and feuds, to local politics, elections, and administrative and developmental affairs.

When the men sleep at home, not only do they have less opportunity for conversational exchange, but the women are inhibited from talking among themselves. There is, however, one positive impact of this change: children now have more opportunity to interact with their parents. In former times, Kohistani children used to have little contact with their fathers in their early years.

3.2. Language use in the market place

In the Indus valley (Chilas, Darel, Tangir, Shatial, Dasso and Komila) and in Astor and Shina-speaking parts of Nagir, Shina is spoken outside the home for local communication and in small local marketplaces. However, if a shop-

keeper is addressed in Urdu or (in the Indus valley) in Pashto, he responds in that language.¹³

In Gilgit town, uneducated local residents speak Shina in public fora, but educated local residents prefer to speak Urdu or English. In the Northern Light Infantry¹⁴ Market, the shopkeepers (the majority of whom are Pashtuns) prefer to speak Pashto, although many of them also know Urdu and Shina. Shopkeepers in smaller neighborhood markets (the majority of whom are local people, as are their customers) speak Shina. When leading intellectual figures were interviewed, however, they reported an increase in the use of Urdu. Sher Baz Ali Khan Barcha reports that literate Shina speakers feel “cultural shame” at speaking Shina in the marketplace or official workplaces.¹⁵ Amin Zia (poet and scholar), Abdul Khaliq Taj (poet, writer, and magistrate), Jamshed Khan Dukhi (poet and writer) and Tariq (radio and television reporter) report that the use of Urdu is increasing in Gilgit town.¹⁶

In the major Indus valley towns (Chilas, Darel and Tangir), Shina is the language of the marketplace for local people, although shopkeepers readily speak Urdu or Pashto with outsiders. In the Kohistan district (Shatial, Dassu, Komila, Sumar Nala etc., where there are no major towns) all business is transacted in Kohistani dialects of Shina; likewise in the smaller bazaars of Darel and Tangir.

Several small bazaar towns are located on the west bank of the Indus (Patan, Jijal and Duber), where non-Shina Dardic languages referred to under the umbrella term “Indus Kohistani” are spoken. Here, Shina serves as a second language and as a lingua franca among people who are neither ethnic Shins nor Indus Kohistanis (Syeds, Pashtuns, Sarkhali, Gujars, and Shamo-gas¹⁷).

Bazaars are, like anywhere a major entry point for new technologies, products, and tools. The Urdu or English names for these products and technologies naturally follow. Abdul Khaliq Taj reports that his children (like many others) have lost the words for traditional agricultural tools and technology, because the tractor has replaced the plough, manufactured cloth is replacing handwoven wool, and so on. When the old technology is cast away, the younger generation does not learn the vocabulary which referred to it.

3.3. Language use in religious rituals

In bilingual areas, Shina tends not to be used in ceremonial speech on formal religious occasions, such as the Friday sermon, Eid sermon, or Muharram recitations. Apart from the Arabic portions, these are usually in Urdu or Pashto. Ordinary religious instruction is, however, either given in Shina or

translated from Arabic into Shina. Difficulties of translation have led to some attempts to write and publish religious tracts in Shina.

In the predominantly Shia rural areas of Gilgit, Shia *zakrins* (Shia mullahs) address their congregations in Shina during Muharram,¹⁸ but in Gilgit town, they use Urdu in Muharram recitations. Both Shia and Sunni mullahs address their congregations in Urdu in Friday prayers, as well as on the occasion of the two major religious festivals or *eids*. But practical religious instruction is given in Arabic, and explained in Shina; and *du'a* (non-obligatory personal prayer) is said in Shina by practically everybody.

Tariq of Astor reports that in Astor, the medium of Tablighi preachings and religious lessons (*dars*) held in the mosque is Shina.

In Kohistan, the Friday sermon and Eid sermons may be in Urdu or Pashto, but ordinary religious instruction is in Shina. Throughout the Indus valley proper (Kolai, Palas, Jalkot, Harban and Shatial, Chilas, Darel and Tangir), the majority of Kohistani and Chilasi men belong to the Tablighi Jamaat, and may leave Kohistan to spend fixed periods of three days, forty days, four months, six months, or one year in study groups held in any of the four provinces of Pakistan. Whatever they learn, they communicate to their family and relatives in Shina. Religious instruction is given to children by their parents and grandparents, and such instruction is always in Shina. The Tablighi *nisab* or syllabus (published in Urdu) is read in Urdu, along with a direct translation into Shina, which is a long-established practice. The more remote the area, the greater the use of Shina as the medium of instruction.

In Kohistan, there are many small *madrasas* (religious schools) where children study Islamic books written in Arabic, Persian, or Pashto, which the teacher then explains in Shina. Local mullahs give religious instruction in Shina, and there are two or three places in Kohistan where girls are able to learn the Quran through Shina translation.

The need to reach out to people in the local language has resulted in attempts at publishing religious works in Shina. Hussain Akbar has published a biography of the prophet, *Somolo Rasul* [The Holy Prophet], in 1992. Nasiruddin Chilasi [no date] published a 254-page work in Chilasi Shina, *Zad-e-Safar* [Provisions for the Journey], and Abdul Rauf of Palas is preparing a Tablighi primer in Shina, with publication expected shortly. The target audience of all these works is local people, especially women, who are not literate in Urdu or Pashto. Other Tablighis are preparing a tract in Shina on the six principles of Tabligh.¹⁹ Despite their high motivation, these authors are hindered by the lack of a standard orthography, especially for the Kohistani dialect.

3.4. Language use in education

3.4.1. *The school system*

Before independence, the Shina-speaking areas of Gilgit, Astor, and Dras were located in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. This geographical area, broken into isolated valleys by the mountain ranges of the Himalayas and Karakoram and the river systems of the Jhelum and Indus, is one of the most polyglot regions of the world, and seems always to have used some administrative language of non-Kashmiri, non-Dardic origin: Sanskrit in pre-Islamic times and Persian under Mughal rule. Urdu superseded Persian as the administrative language in the second decade of the twentieth century (Sufi 1974: 812–813). After independence, Gilgit and Astor came under Pakistani administration. The Government of Pakistan is the largest provider of educational services, and since its beginnings, has worked to make Urdu a symbol of Pakistani national identity, of Islam and of the values of Mughal culture (Rahman 1999: 67–68). The Northern Areas and Kohistan follow the broad outlines of the curriculum defined by the Federal Ministry of Education, and the textbooks in effect determine the curriculum (World Bank 1997: 7–8), in which Shina finds no place, either as a subject of study or as a medium of instruction; nor can it be studied as a subject at university level. (In primary grades, of course, teachers may use Shina to explain the textbooks to the students.) Shina-speaking children use textbooks written in Urdu and English. In middle schools, they usually also learn Arabic or Persian. In the Indus valley, which lies in the North West Frontier Province, they are also supposed to learn the provincial language, Pashto. To teach all these languages effectively would require a much better teaching standard than exists in most schools. But one message does, however, get through: a language is not a language (*zaban*) unless it has a written literature. An unwritten language like Shina is only a dialect (*boli*), and not worthy of study.

Except in Gilgit town, the impression one gets includes educational facilities in poor condition, often poorly trained or untrained teachers with little supervision or academic support and limited and/or inappropriate instructional materials. In Kohistan, many schools were observed to be closed, or were used to store hay.

In *madrasas* (religious schools), Arabic is taught, in many cases alongside Persian (Rahman 1999: 106–107, 115–116).

The Northern Areas has received substantial educational benefits from non-governmental donors. The second largest provider of educational services in the Northern Areas is the Agha Khan Rural Support Program, with

250 schools established in cooperation with village organizations across the five districts of the Northern Areas. This program has also actively recruited female teachers. Even so, only 44% of primary teachers hold the Primary Teaching Certificate, and 11% have not completed the matric, or grade 10 (World Bank 1997: 6). Low educational standards do not negatively affect Shina, however. In Gilgit town, where educational facilities are best, Urdu and English have taken over more domains from Shina than in rural areas, and Shina suffers from greater stigma.

In Kohistan (Kolai, Palas and Jalkot) there were no schools until 1984; the only education available was religious instruction. Government schools have been in existence for only about two decades. In these schools, the medium of instruction is Urdu except in one or two English-medium private schools. Although the majority of the teachers here are Shina speakers, this does not result in better instruction. Pedagogical techniques are usually limited to reciting and translating textbooks written in Urdu, and monolingual Shina-speaking children make slow progress.

In Kohistan, children accompany their families on the seasonal migration to alpine pastures in the summer, where one may occasionally find schools, or occasionally find teachers, but seldom both together. Even if this problem could be solved, children may be put to collecting medicinal plants and mushrooms which are sold for cash income, and so would be unable to attend school. By contrast, among the Kohistani Shina-speakers who have emigrated to urban areas of Pakistan, an estimated 80% of families educate their children, both boys and girls. In Rawalpindi and some other highly urbanized areas, the figure approaches 100%. This reflects the fact that a primary reason for emigration is to take advantage of the better educational facilities in cities. Boys are educated to the highest level the family can afford, usually to the F.A. (12th class) or B.A., and girls generally up to the matric (10th class) or F.A. About 50% of these educated girls are married back into families residing in Kohistan.

In the Gilgit district, educational facilities (both Urdu and English medium) are much better than in the Kohistan district. In addition to government schools, there are four good "public schools" (i.e., private or semiprivate schools, not government schools) offering education to both boys and girls up to the best Pakistani standard: (a) Army Public School, (b) Al-Hayaat Public School, (c) Fauji Foundation School and (d) Al-Azhar School & College.

Foreign aided educational projects to raise the literacy rate have been carried out throughout the region both by the Government of Pakistan and by non-governmental organizations (namely, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Agha Khan Rural Support Program, World Wildlife Fund-

Pakistan). These attempts have been effective in Gilgit town and its side valleys, but not in the Indus valley.

In Kohistan there is an intermediate college, which is not functional at present. In Chilas and Gilgit there are both colleges and a university (the International Karakoram University, run by the Government of Pakistan in Gilgit). Gilgiti intellectuals favor the inclusion of Shina in the school curriculum, and Amin Zia, Jamshed, Tariq and Abdul Khaliq Taj advocate the opening of a Shina section in the Karakoram University, but theirs are minority voices, and no concrete steps are being taken.

Education of girls is a problematical issue in some places. In Gilgit, there is little opposition to it, and in both Gilgit and Chilas town, girls attend school. In Kohistan, the number of girls attending school is miniscule, and in Darel several girls' schools were recently set on fire as a protest against the education of women. By contrast, in lowland urban areas, Shina-speaking girls are not kept out of school, and many who return to Kohistan, Chilas or Astor find employment as schoolteachers.

To the degree that educational services are provided, they directly result in a loss of the mother tongue, Shina. Modern educational policies and practices have simply continued the ancient tradition of adopting and promoting a non-indigenous administrative language.

3.4.2. Literacy and enrollment

The literacy rate for the Northern Areas as per the 1998 Census has not been released by the Government of Pakistan. The literacy rate reported by the 1981 Census was 14.7% (World Bank 1997: 2). The literacy rate in Kohistan district among the population aged ten years and above is 11.08%, an increase of 9.68% since 1981.²⁰ These figures are skewed by the Census' definition of literacy: the ability to read a newspaper and write a simple letter. In Kohistan, one must know Urdu, Pashto or English to possess these skills. We have observed that many people who are not literate by this definition are still able to read the Quran in Arabic; and following the publication of a Shina primer in Arabic characters (Kohistani and Schmidt 1996) we observed so-called "illiterates" who were able to read the Shina texts in the primer.

According to the World Bank (1997: 51), just over half of school-age children of primary school age in the Northern Areas were enrolled in school in 1994. In the Diamer district, enrollment of girls was much lower, only 14% of the school-age population, reflecting a local bias against the education of females.

Table 3. Literacy rate, enrollment in schools and number of schools

	Both sexes	Male	Female
Literacy rate in the Northern Areas (1981)	14.7%	24%	3%
Enrollment rate at primary school level (1994)	N.A.	74%	35%
Enrollment rate at middle school level (1994)	N.A.	54%	18%
Literacy rate in Kohistan:	11.08%	17.23%	2.95%
Educated Persons by sex in Kohistan: ²⁴	10.19%	16.15%	2.32%
Enrollment rate in Kohistan ²⁵	6.89%	10.60%	1.34%
Schools in Gilgit District, Northern Areas		Male	Female
High schools		26	8
Middle schools		27	10
Primary schools		58	25
Schools in Diamer District, Northern Areas			
High schools		14	1
Middle schools		28	6
Primary schools		127	22
Schools in Shina-speaking areas of District Kohistan			
High schools		3	nil
Middle schools		18	nil
Primary schools		310	60

3.5. Language use in public administration

As already observed, Urdu and English are the languages of public administration (police stations, hospitals, and courts) in Gilgit. In the Indus valley, the languages of public administration are Shina with Shina-speaking personnel, and Urdu and Pashto with outsiders. Unfortunately, Shina-speaking policemen, magistrates or doctors are exceptions worth mentioning, rather than the rule, and in the absence of statistics we must restrict ourselves to on-the-spot observations. In Kohistan, where the rate of bilingualism is low, local people communicate in Shina wherever possible, but this is only the case where administrative personnel also speak Shina. Given the low levels of education in Kohistan, many posts are held by outsiders who do not speak Shina, but there are exceptions, especially in the Department of Education. In Kohistan District headquarters at Dassu, local employees and local people speak Shina in offices, hospitals, and the courts, a situation which has been observed for the past 12 years on official visits to these places. The same was observed in Chilas on the occasion of employment interviews at Diamer district headquarters in March 2004. In addition to the hundreds of young people from Astor,

Darel, Tangir and Chilas who had come for the interview, there was a rush of onlookers from the bazaar. The Deputy Superintendent of Police, who along with his policemen was controlling the crowds, was observed speaking Shina with them.

Because women are the least educated segment of the population, Shina is more likely to be used in hospitals than in any other sector of public administration. Again, this is only possible when there is medical staff who know Shina. Such personnel are the exception rather than the rule, but may provide role models for younger Shina-speakers. Dr. Hafiza Bano of Gilgit (a Kashmiri woman who now speaks Shina at home) was observed speaking Shina when treating patients. For many years, there was a German health project in Kohistan (unfortunately now closed) which organized monthly health clinics at Pattan and Dassu. The women doctors in this project realized that the local women could not communicate properly in Urdu or Pashto, and so learned Shina and Indus Kohistani to gain a better understanding of their medical problems, with good results. In remote areas (like Sheryal and Paro in the Palas valley) where no female doctors have been posted, male doctors or dispensers treat patients, and some have been observed speaking Shina with both male and female patients. However a male doctor may not examine a woman to diagnose complaints of the reproductive system, and if the woman must rely on a translator (who is usually a male, since a woman must be accompanied by a male relative when she travels), social norms make it difficult for the woman to discuss intimate problems. Junior level women health workers (such as midwives) who do speak Shina may serve as an interface between patient and doctor in these situations. In lowland urban areas, most Shina-speaking women know enough Urdu, Hindko, Punjabi, or Pashto to report their symptoms to doctors in these languages.

4. Effects of the media

4.1. Radio

News reports in Shina are broadcast from Islamabad Radio Station. In the past Islamabad also used to broadcast recitations of the Quran with Shina translations, folk songs, letters etc. Gilgit Radio Station broadcasts folk songs, *ghazals*,²¹ dramas, commentaries, and stories. A number of pre-eminent writers of Shina in Gilgit (Amin Zia, Abdul Khaliq Taj, Jamshed Khan Dukhi, and Tariq) are dissatisfied with current radio programming, commenting that the broadcasting staff have low levels of competence and creativity, and receive little technical support in writing. They also maintain that the news broadcasts

in Shina are perfunctorily translated from Urdu, and are full of linguistic errors which degrade the status of Shina rather than promoting its use. To illustrate these opinions, they produced many examples from radio programming.²² Sher Baz Ali Khan Barcha, however, reports that the impact of radio broadcasting in Shina is very positive, resulting in an increased local interest.²³

The staff of the Islamabad Radio Station get little support for their efforts. Most work on an hourly basis, and have other full time jobs, so have little time for improving their knowledge of Shina. They have also failed to adopt a standardized writing system, so manuscripts are produced with no systematic rendering of Shina phonology and vocabulary. At the Gilgit Radio Station, the day-to-day interface with Shina-speaking writers and scholars has led to an improvement in language use, and script writers do try to standardize the spelling of Shina to be consistent with Shina phonology. This represents the beginning of a standardization process, though only in Gilgit. In Kohistan, there is little interest in the Shina broadcasts, which are not easily understood due to the low level of lexical similarity as mentioned in section 2.1 above.

Radio programming does have an impact in the listening audience, as it introduces new ideas, international news, national and local political coverage, information about the economy, religious ideas, and so on. To properly assess the impact, a listener survey would be necessary, which was beyond the resources of the authors.

4.2. Television

The introduction of the satellite dish has brought not only national television programming to Pakistan's Northern Areas and Kohistan, but also international programming. English and Urdu films can be viewed by means of satellite dishes, video cassette recorders/players, compact disks, and internet services, wherever the facilities and resources are available (not only in Gilgit town but also in remote villages).

In areas where television broadcasts are accessible, evening hours at home are often spent watching them. This is traditionally the time when parents and children interact, so television hence reduces contact between children and parents. A cultural impact can also be observed. In the bazaars of Gilgit, Chilas and Kohistan, one can now buy products ranging from soap, shampoo and lipstick to video players and motorcycles. In households where dried fruit and nuts would have once been served to guests, western-style biscuits are now offered. Carpets and cushions are being supplemented by chairs and sofas. Chemical fertilizer is replacing manure. People are adopting the fashions and

hairstyles of urban cities in the lowlands, as well as western furniture. Films have introduced the concept of modern romance, even though it remains taboo to a certain extent. The *hujra* and *baithak* are becoming *drawing rooms*, and *babu* and *aji* are becoming *mummy* and *papa*.

A concern among Shina-speakers in Gilgit is that the demand for products produced in lowland Pakistan takes money out of the local sector and puts it into the hands of the producers and their middlemen (who are often also non-local). Half the business income in areas such as Gilgit goes to non-local people. But rather than acting as a brake on consumption, this encourages migration to the lowlands to seek better-paid employment.

There is no television programming whatsoever in the Shina language, although there is programming in some regional languages such as Gujarati, Kashmiri and Hindko. Some efforts have been made to videofilm dramas in Shina, both in the Gilgit district and in the Ghizar District. As the number of television channels, both government and private, expands, demand will also increase, and it is hoped that the barriers presented by the lack of a standardized script can be overcome through television and radio broadcasting.

4.3. Print media

There are no newspapers of any sort published in Shina. In Gilgit, Chilas and Kohistan, a wide range of Urdu and English daily newspapers are available.

While a great deal of information about the Northern Areas, and even about Kohistan, is available in European languages, published works in Shina are far more limited. We were able to obtain details on the following published books (although the list is not complete, since some publications were mentioned to us, but could not be traced). Many works do not furnish information about the publisher or the date of publication. The process of publication has become slightly easier with the introduction of Urdu fonts on the computer, but Shina characters which do not exist in Urdu must still be added by hand.

In Shina

Akbar, Hussain Akbar

1992 *Somolo Rasul* [The Holy Prophet]. Islamabad: Modern Book Depot Islamabad.

Chilasi, Nasiruddin

[N.D.] *Zad-e-safar: Kalam Baba Chilasi* [Provisions for the Journey: Collected Poems of Baba Chilasi].

Kohistani, Razwal, with Ruth Laila Schmidt

1996 *Shina Qaida* [Shina Environmental Primer]. Islamabad: Himalayan Jungle Project.

- Kohistani, Razwal
1997 *Kostan da Adoyati Goryo Riwaiti Istimal* [Indigenous Knowledge of Medicinal Plants in Indus Kohistan]. Rawalpindi: Shina Research Forum-Karakorum.
- Kohistani, Razwal
1999 *Bunyadi Shina Urdu Lughat* [Basic Shina-Urdu Dictionary]. Rawalpindi, S.T. Printers.
- Mursaleen, Maulvi Zia ul
[N.D.] *Qaida Kohistani Masdar Haroof* [Primer of Kohistani Shina].
- Taj, Abdul Khaliq
1989 *Shina Qaida* [Shina Primer].
- Zia, Mohammad Amin
1974 *San* [The Wine-Pit]. [Collected Poems, in Shina]. Rawalpindi, S.T. Printers.
- Zia, Mohammad Amin
1978 *Soweno Moriye* [Words of the Wise]. Shina Proverbs, in Shina. Islamabad: Folk Heritage Institute.

Noteworthy works on Shina and Shina-speakers in Urdu

- Kohistani, Razwal
1998 *Indus Kohistan* [Indus Kohistan (ethnography and history)]. Rawalpindi: Shina Research Forum-Karakorum.
- Namus, Dr. M. Shuja
1961 *Gilgit aur Shina Zaban* [Gilgit and the Shina Language]. Bahawalpur: Urdu Academy.
- Zia, Mohammad Amin
1986 *Shina Qaida aur Graimar* [Shina Primer and Grammar]. Gilgit: Zia Publications.

5. Impact of tourism

Tourism, both international and national, has been a major source of income for Pakistan's Northern Areas, including Gilgit and Hunza, but following the attacks of September 11, international tourism has dramatically dropped and hotels are virtually empty. (The Government of Pakistan does not allow tourism in Indus Kohistan.) Everywhere that tourists go, they promote the learning of English and Urdu, so although they provide much-needed economic resources, they contribute nothing towards strengthening the use of Shina.

6. Conclusions

The vast area and rugged geography of the Shina language area ensure that the language is in little danger of suffering language death in the near future.

But there is equally little chance of it developing a single standardized form, or more than a rudimentary written literature. Modernization, including modern education, reinforces the time-honoured policy of adopting and promoting a non-indigenous language: Urdu, and more recently, English. This inculcates in educated Shina speakers the attitude that their mother tongue is inferior, and makes them ashamed to speak it in public.

In Gilgit, the interaction between script writers at the Gilgit Radio Station and Shina-speaking writers and scholars has led to the the beginning of a standardization process for that dialect. However, in Kohistan, where the percent of lexical similarity with Gilgiti Shina is only about 65%, there is little interest in the Shina broadcasts from Gilgit, or in adopting a Gilgiti standard variety. Lexical divergence between Gilgiti and Kohistani is reinforced by a sectarian split between Shias and Sunnis, which prevents the largest Shina-speaking town, Gilgit, from emerging as an engine for development of literature and cultural activities in Shina, and hinders the development of a standard written form of the language. The Shina outliers (Palula, Kalkoti, Sawi and Ushojo) spoken by small, isolated populations in areas dominated by other languages are in the weakest position, and there is a real risk that some of them may die out. The dominant languages in public administration are Urdu and English in the Gilgit District, and Urdu and Pashto in the Diamer and Kohistan Districts. Shina-speaking public servants are the exception rather than the rule. Educational services throughout the region are substandard, except in Gilgit town, but improvement of the educational standard results in the loss of Shina linguistic domains to Urdu and English. Nowhere is there any formal instruction in Shina, nor is there any initiative from the government to introduce it, or much public support for its introduction. Islamic preachers, whose work challenges many traditional customs, actually promote the use of Shina in both oral and written forms by preaching in it and, to a lesser extent, using it to write religious tracts.

Thus, in the Shina-speaking areas of Pakistan, we see a typical South Asian pattern in miniature: the imposition of non-indigenous, standard languages on regions without a written language of their own, the imposition of high-culture values and norms on indigenous cultures, and an attempt to extend national legal and educational systems into these areas. We also see, at the same time, Shina being vitalized through the activities of religious preachers who are mobile throughout this region, and by the efforts by intellectuals to produce regional written literatures.

Notes

1. Strand 2001a: 254; Strand 2001b; Kohistani, interview with Muhammad Zaman, Besham, 27th March 2004.
2. In addition to the rather sparse published information about language use in the Shina-speaking area, data has also been collected through participant observation by Razwal Kohistani in the Diamer and Kohistan districts, and in lowlands communities to which Shina-speakers have migrated. Data for Gilgit and Astor was collected from a panel interview of four leading intellectuals (Amin Zia, Abdul Khaliq Taj, Jamshed Khan Dukhi and Tariq) in Gilgit on 8 March 2004, from an interview with Sherbaz Ali Khan Barcha in Gilgit on 8 March 2004 and through participant observation in the marketplace. Henrik Liljegren of the Frontier Language Institute and Muhammad Zaman of the Summer Institute of Linguistics provided information about dialects of Shina in Chitral, in an interview held in Besham on 27 March 2004. Where no other source is cited, the data is taken from Razwal Kohistani's notes.
3. Information provided in this paper on the Shina-speaking population of Astor and the use of Shina in that valley is based on the already published material and the information provided by Tariq from Astor in the panel interview held in Gilgit, 8 March 2004.
4. Radloff (1992: 122–132) finds that in areas at the northern and southern extremes of the Shina-speaking zone, lexical similarity is quite low. 11 of 12 respondents from Kohistan said that "their language" was not broadcast on Radio Pakistan.
5. For a description of the ethnic makeup of Kohistan, see Zarin and Schmidt (1984).
6. Monolingualism among women has been a characteristic feature of rural areas of the Northwest Frontier Province. However, a new generation of educated girls is being married back into Kohistan, and this may bring about change.
7. Interviews with Muhammad Zaman and Henrik Liljegren, 27 March 2004. See also Cacopardo and Cacopardo (2001: 86–87).
8. Bashir 2003: 878; Interview with Muhammad Zaman of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, 27 March 2004.
9. Interview, 8 March 2004.
10. The Tablighi Jamaat is an Islamic missionary movement which works to invigorate faith at an individual level. Some sources link it to the Deobandi sect, but the Tablighis themselves insist that they remain aloof from all sectarian or political activity.
11. Although the ethnic Shins of Kohistan cherish an egalitarian tradition among themselves, non-Shin communities such as Yeshkuns, Kamins and Doms have a lower status than Shins.
12. Interview with Amin Zia, Abdul Khaliq Taj, Jamshed Khan Dukhi and Tariq, 8 March 2004.
13. Shopkeeping is a profession requiring more language skills than others. In the 1970s, Schmidt observed that the shopkeepers of Rawalpindi Bazaar had learned rudimentary Italian, as a result of Italian housewives from the Tarbela Dam project shopping there.
14. The Northern Light Infantry are the Pakistani government troops posted to the Northern Areas.

15. Interview with Sher Baz Ali Khan Barcha, 8 March 2004.
16. Panel interview with Amin Zia, Abdul Khaliq Taj, Jamshed Khan Dukhi and Tariq, 8 March 2004.
17. Shamogas have migrated from the Banihal area of Kashmir. Their language is reported as Pahari, but this just means "of the hills" (as does "Kohistani"). Their language may in fact be a dialect of Poguli (see Schmidt and Koul 1983: 11), but the authors have not been able to confirm this.
18. Muharram is the Shia month of mourning, during which the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson Husain is remembered through recitation of the sacred stories and ritual mourning.
19. The six principles, or "numbers" of the Tablighis are: (1) the *kalima*, or declaration of the faith, (2) the five daily prayers, (3) knowledge of and memorization about God (Allah), (4) benevolence to Muslims, (5) purity of intention and (6) spending time and money in spreading the word of God.
20. Government of Pakistan 1998: 23.
21. A ghazal is a lyrical poem in the Mughal tradition.
22. Panel interview with Amin Zia, Abdul Khaliq Taj, Jamshed Khan Dukhi and Tariq, 8 March 2004.
23. Interview with Sher Baz Ali Khan Barcha, 8 March 2004.
24. Government of Pakistan 1998: 25.
25. Government of Pakistan 1998: 25.

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